

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 545

By Henry

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Mr. W.F. "Red" Moss,
former Commissioner of Agriculture.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to remember the accomplishments of those Tennesseans who, during their respective lifetimes, served their fellow citizens with the utmost integrity, dedication and ability; and

WHEREAS, the late Mr. W.F. "Red" Moss, Tennessee's longest serving Commissioner of Agriculture, was most certainly one such exemplary public servant; and

WHEREAS, December 29, 1999, was truly a sad day for all people who had the distinct privilege of knowing Red Moss, as well as for the entire state of Tennessee, as this remarkable man passed away at the age of 90; and

WHEREAS, born in 1909 in the Jersey community of Hamilton County, Red Moss was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Howell Moss, and was the last surviving member of his family of six brothers, J.E., Ray, Arlie, H.S., and Phillip and sister, Margaret Solomon; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Moss attended the Hamilton County public schools and was rewarded for his outstanding academic achievements with a *Chattanooga Times* scholarship to the University of Chattanooga where he studied from 1926 to 1929. He then transferred to the

University of Tennessee to complete his studies and was awarded a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture in 1931; and

WHEREAS, he cultivated and expanded young minds by teaching vocational agriculture at both Elkton in Giles County and Jellico in Campbell County; and

WHEREAS, Red Moss successfully completed work on a Master's Degree in Animal Industry from North Carolina State University, and proceeded to join the University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service in 1935 as a County Agent in Rhea County; and

WHEREAS, in 1942, he continued his laudable service to the state as an Extension Agent in Marshall County; in 1947, he was named District Dairy Specialist and he served with great distinction in the Chattanooga area; and

WHEREAS, he was appointed as Assistant Commissioner of Agriculture in 1953 and was subsequently appointed Commissioner of Agriculture for Tennessee by former Governor Frank Clement in 1956, when Commissioner Buford Ellington resigned from that office to run for governor; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Moss served with acumen and alacrity as Tennessee's Commissioner of Agriculture for 13 years during both the Clement and Ellington administrations, before retiring in 1971; there is perhaps no other single individual living today who has wielded more influence over all aspects of Tennessee agriculture; and

WHEREAS, following his distinguished service to Tennessee, he successfully performed his duties as an Assistant to the United States Secretary of Agriculture, Earl Butz, for two years; after this term of service he returned to Tennessee in 1972 to continue his work with absolute and unwavering dedication at the University of Tennessee until his retirement; and

WHEREAS, an acclaimed fundraiser, Mr. Moss was instrumental in raising thousands of dollars for the University of Tennessee's Institute of Agriculture, as well as the Tennessee 4-H Foundation; he also gave generously of his personal resources to advance agricultural education in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, in an act of great beneficence, Mr. and Mrs. Moss donated their Davidson County farm to the University of Tennessee; the University sold the farm for \$220,000 in 1977, thus qualifying as the largest gift given to the University during its “Tennessee Tomorrow” campaign; and

WHEREAS, the money raised from the sale of the Moss Farm was used to establish the Moss Endowment to fund outstanding teaching and student awards in the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine, and to fund a special landscaping project on the agriculture campus and the agriculture library; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Moss selflessly donated an additional \$60,000 in 1985 to fund grants, and he later gave \$50,000 to establish the Golda Moss Scholarship Endowment at the University of Tennessee in memory of his late wife, who passed away in 1992; and

WHEREAS, a stalwart member of the Tennessee 4-H Club Foundation, and longtime supporter of the Future Farmers of America, Mr. Moss established the Tennessee FFA breakfast at the National Convention, and was instrumental in the Department of Agriculture’s continued support of 4-H projects; and

WHEREAS, he was a charter member and active supporter of the Oscar Farris Agricultural Museum at Ellington Agriculture Center; he was duly recognized for his outstanding leadership in Tennessee agriculture when the administration building at Ellington Center was named in his honor; and

WHEREAS, his exemplary efforts and powerful presence in the field of agriculture were acclaimed in 1961 when he was named by *Progressive Farmer* magazine as their “Man of the Year in Tennessee Agriculture”; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Red Moss was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, he enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife, the former Golda Siler, who preceded him in death, and was the proud parent of daughter Patsy, and grandparent of Winston Douglas Walker and Leslee Moss Walker; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Moss leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Moss was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we honor the memory of Mr. W.F. "Red" Moss, the longest serving Commissioner of Agriculture in Tennessee, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character, uncounted contributions to Tennessee agriculture, and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the friends and family of Mr. Moss.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation and sent to Ms. Patricia A. Moss; 5408 Ainsworth Drive; Greensboro, NC 27410, and that an additional copy be sent to Dr. Joseph E. Johnson, President Emeritus of The University of Tennessee, with this final clause omitted from such copies.